

FMD Update

Foot and Mouth disease affects animals like cattle, swine and, sheep, not humans. The virus however, can be easily transmitted through clothing and shoes and can live for days in both animal and human nasal tissues. Unsuspecting travelers can transport the disease quickly to non-infected animals.

Because this disease is highly contagious and can live for days outside of a host, it is a great concern. Washington is a gateway trading state, connecting Asian trade to the U.S. economy. Washington's Puget Sound seaports move large volumes of imported manufactured goods that are shipped in containers from Asian trading partners. We also get a lot of visitors that travel from Asia to different destinations in Washington; there is always the potential for one of these visitors to unintentionally carry this highly contagious disease.

The current outbreak in Japan is in the Miyazaki Prefecture on the Southern island of Kyushu where they have already euthanized some 35,000 cattle and pigs. That number could go up into the hundreds of thousands as they mobilize more people in the field to control this outbreak.

For those traveling to Japan and Korea, do not visit farms or ranches until the outbreak is over. Travelers are also being asked to avoid contact with livestock or wildlife for five days prior to and after returning home from these regions.

Below is a short list of biosecurity precautions that all of the cattle industry can use to assist in protecting their operations.

- 1) Know the source of incoming animals and do the required testing before the animals reach your ranch, feedlot or dairy.
- 2) Isolate newly purchased animals from resident animals for at least a week, and preferably 2 weeks. Feed and care for those animals after you have cared for all your other animals first. Do not allow common watering and feeding areas.
- 3) Pay close attention to who enters your yard. Get to know employees and learn about any outside activities relating to the health of your animals. Do they keep animals of their own, or do close family members work for other animal operations? Keep a visitor log and inquire if visitors have been in foreign countries or a disease outbreak area within the previous two weeks. Politely refuse admittance to your ranch, feedlot or dairy if you feel uncomfortable with their answers or they are reluctant to give travel information. Consider disposable footwear for visitors or disinfecting shoe mats.
- 4) If you exhibit animals at a fair or show, make sure you have discussed a vaccination protocol with your herd veterinarian. Isolate returning animals as in #2 above.
- 5) Don't allow rendering transport vehicles into feeding or housing areas. Consider having a designated, easily disinfected, pickup spot away from other animals.

- 6) Become familiar with service personnel (feed representatives, feed trucks, equipment service personnel, etc). Ask them to wear protective disposable boots and make them aware of your efforts to protect your animals.
- 7) Report all possible reportable conditions to the State Veterinarian's office by calling (360) 902-1878 or (360) 902-1835.